Newport Philatelic Society

Newsletter Spring Third Release: Number 62 April 2020

Introduction:

Dear members, firstly I wish you all good health and ask you to keep safe during these difficult times. I asked for some member stories and you have kindly responded but I can take more, the more the merrier! Therefore, if you can write a few words I will keep creating this newsletter for all of us to share our philatelic journeys during this lockdown. The society is only as strong as our members so this is great opportunity to reach and communicate across the group. If anyone wants to make contact or has any requests please let the committee know. As before, I will gradually put all of the issues of the newsletter on the society's website which can be found at:

https://newportgwentphilatelic.weebly.com/

In this issue we have three member contributions, two from Roy and Graham on their early days of stamp collecting and an article of a new collecting topic from Lynne which he has , kindly offered to share with us.

Why I started collecting:

I am pleased to report and with many thanks that our next contributor to the "why I starting collecting" is our dealer member Roy. For Roy's author picture I have found a great picture of Roy and John having fun at a Newport Society stamp fair.

The rummager-in-chief is still at it! Just a few thoughts on how I started stamp collecting, which might touch a few memories elsewhere. Like Roy Bentley, I remember going to various high street outlets for packets of stamps, Woolworths was my favourite, mainly because the stamps were next to the sweet counter! When I look through old albums now, I still recognize the Woolworths French Colony packet contents!

I was also very lucky in that my father had a friend and colleague who was the export director of a worldwide telephone company called A.T.M., now absorbed many times over into other companies. He used to give me bundles of envelope and parcel cut-outs with stamps from around the world. I then soaked them off [Oh! heretic] and stuck them into my Dick Barton album. I see these stamps now [still on envelopes!]and cringe at the prices they fetch! We live and occasionally learn!

As I became a little older [10-ish, I guess], I used to cycle into my nearest big town, Uxbridge, with my mates. There was a lovely little stamp shop there, like so most others, sadly closed down. It also had the additional benefit of being next to the cinema, so Saturdays were pretty blissful!

When I reached 'big school', we had a Stamp Club, run by my housemaster, Dr. Pears, known to everyone as 'Soapy' – not original, I know, but easy to

remember. The competitions could get pretty tense, but I do remember gaining a few packets of hinges and magnifying glasses! I have to confess that was the last time I ever entered Stamp Competitions [shame on me].

Another confession. As teenage years approached, I'm afraid sport of any description and girls [not of any description] rather climbed the ladder of importance. I only returned to philately many years later. That is another story.

<u>Why I started collecting: (2)</u>

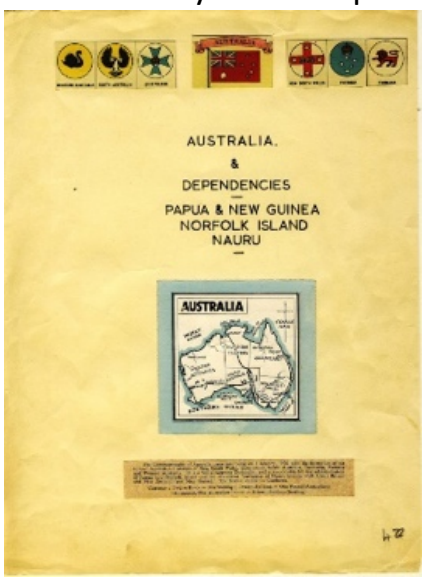
We are also lucky in this issue to have a second contribution on a member's early beginnings in stamps and we are grateful to Graham in this instance for sharing his story. His author picture shows him enjoying a birthday present in a replica AC Cobra!

As Roy Bentley described his first collecting memories, I remember my first attempt at stamp collecting. I think it was a boyhood craze with all my pals at the time and I don't even remember having an album. There was a "dealer" who lived a few street away and when you wanted to buy stamps you went to his house, a terrace, and the front door was invariably open, as I remember it, but there was a small counter across the passageway a few feet in just in front of his parlour door on the left. You had to call him if he wasn't present and when he arrived you told him what you wanted, which was pretty much anything, and then he fetched a stockbook from the parlour from which you selected your stamps. There was no idea about collecting thematics or specific countries and

my choices were the special shape stamps such as the triangular and diamond shaped from Countries like Costa Rica. Much more interesting than the boring square stamps from Great Britain. I had no idea of catalogue values either and as pocket was virtually non-existent probably every purchase was either a halfpenny or one penny. The craze didn't last long and I never knew what happened to them.

Boyhood memories from long ago.

The "serious" period of collecting began in my twenty's. My wife and I used to socialize with some friends, Nick and his girlfriend who worked with my wife in a Metallurgical lab analysing steel. Nick declared one evening over a drink that he was giving up his job to work for a stamp dealer. Stunned I said, "it's a kids game". He soon made me aware that it was a bit more than that. My mother had fairly bad Rheumatoid Arthritis and she was collecting stamps as a way to keep her fingers active to prevent them locking. Hearing that Nick had gone into the stamp trade she asked him to get her some GB and he supplied all the current QEII commemoratives in mint unmounted condition. She started mounting the stamp in her album using hinges and as she couldn't handle tweezers she used her hands. Because of the Arthritis they were frankly a bit of a mess but she or I didn't know any different. When Nick visited next, she proudly showed him her collection. Discretely later he told me she was ruining them and described to me the Hawid mounts that she should be using. As she couldn't manage the mounts because she couldn't use tweezers, I ended up mounting the stamps for her. Fascinated by the stamps I became hooked and asked Nick to get me a set. Not to have the same collecting topic he suggested another country. Nick as an auction lot describer for Western Auctions said an Australian collection was coming up in the next auction I bid for it, won it, and the rest is history. I blame him for it all!



Australian Collection Cover page from my first purchase at auction from nearly 60 years ago.

Underprints a new collection topic.

Thanks to Lynne for this interesting article to the add to the newsletter. His author picture shows Lynne winning the 2018 Christmas competition with his American Christmas postcards.

I first became aware of the UNDERPRINTS when we washed our stamps from the envelope, the problem was that it did not always leave a very good definition, However I kept at it until I got frustrated with only having successfully got four good impressions. They were put on the back of booklet stamps and Christmas issues so you had to get a lot of on paper stamps with a post mark around the Christmas period and even then you were not sure of getting a good one. Then I saw that Rush stamps had a full set of mint for sale so I went down that path and now here is picture of my complete GB collection.

Final Notes:

Look after yourselves and best wishes to you, your family and friends. Keep safe and well everybody. Until next time!

Les Ashton-Smith